

**THE
PATTERN OF SECULARISM
IN
INDIA AND BANGLADESH**



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BAR-AT-LAW

At last Gandhiji said, "I put it to you youngmen, how can I, who am a Hindu by birth, a Hindu by creed and a Hindu of Hindus in my way of living, be an enemy to Hindus."

(Mahatma Gandhi, the last phase
by Pyarelal Vol. II)

"He (Mahatma Gandhi) was a Hindu and an Indian, the greatest in many generations and he was proud of being a Hindu and an Indian"—Nehru.

(Independence and after published by
Publication Division, Government of India)

"Gandhiji resumed the argument. Since Bengal's common culture as embodied in Tagore, had its roots in the philosophy of Upanishads which was a common heritage not only of Bengal but the whole of India....".

(Mahatma Gandhi, the last phase
by Pyarelal Vol. II).

The first and second quotations referred above are from the speeches just after the partition of India and the last one just before the partition of India, that is middle part of 1947, wherein reference to Bengal is made in respect of undivided Bengal.

The quotation which have been cited here are very significant because the Congress leaders of India, fully realised that if they wanted the support of the majority Indians the religious and cultural creed and philosophy of the majority community must be clearly reflected in every national sphere of the State. Keeping in view the religious sentiment of the majority Indians the Congress ruling party of India adopted a constitution, which reflected religious and cultural sentiments of the majority Indians. The Indian constitution is absolutely silent in respect of secularism and that is most significant.

Pandit Nehru delivered several speeches on Indian Education and Culture. The back ground of his speeches always reflected the culture of the majority people of India. Few quotations from his speeches from the book published by the Publication Division, Government of India are reproduced below :

On Indian Education and Culture Pandit Nehru said—

“Our minds go back to this tremendous epic, the Mahabharata and not only that book but all the back ground that it represents... ..But the Mahabharata continues as powerful as ever and I am inclined to think that the work that has been done and is now being done at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in connection with the preparation of this critical edition of the Mahabharata may have a greater significance in the scheme of things than much that we passing politicians of the day do.”

“Sanskrit became the symbol not only of our people’s thought and religion but the embodiment of cultural unity of India. And so, this Sanskrit language, with

its offshoots, of course, the daughter languages, but even more so with the force of thought and dreams and search of truth and wisdom that it contains has been the inheritance of not only you and me but everybody living in this country, whether in the north or south or west or east."

(Jawharlal Nehru speeches

Volume III).

From Mr. Nehru's speeches one can easily understand the reference to Indian culture by him is in relation to those who have deep connection with Mahabharata and Sanskrit. He omitted to mention in his speech of the vast numbers of people living in India, who represent different culture not connected with Mahabharata and Sanskrit language. Such an omission is most significant which smacks high sounding principles of Indian secularism.

INDIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Mahatma Gandhi's view that the Indian culture has its root in Upanishads is reflected in the Indian National Anthem thoroughly.

Article 25 of the Constitution of India provides that subject to public order and morality and health and other provision of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion.

This article gives preference to Sikh religion by inserting a clause, "The wearing and carrying of Kripans shall be deemed to include in the profession of the Sikh religion."

By inserting another clause in this Article all religions

have been brought within the fold of Hindu religion. The clause provides that, "In sub-clause (b) of clause (2) the reference to Hindu shall be construed as including a reference to persons of Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religion."

It is difficult to understand how Sikh religion which is sternly monotheistic and rejects idolatry and religions like Jainism and Buddhism which do not believe in God could be referred as Hindus by this provision of the Constitution.

Under the Protection of Article 19 of the Constitution, all religious bodies such as Jan Sangh, Hindu Mahasava, Ram Raj Parisad, Siv Sena, R. S. S. and other communal bodies are allowed to function in the political field of India.

Article 28 of the Indian Constitution provides that—

(i) No religious instructions shall be provided in any educational institutions wholly maintained out of State."

(ii) Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowment or trust which requires religious instructions shall be imparted in such institution.

With regard to religious instructions, Article 28 makes a distinction between educational institutions wholly maintained out of State funds and those administered by the State funds and those administered by the State or recognised by the State or receiving aid out of the State funds.

Only in respect of the educational institutions wholly maintained by the State funds clause (1) prohibits to give

religious instructions. But as to those institutions which are administered or recognised by the State or which receive aid from State funds, there is no prohibition from giving religious instruction. That is, if an institution, which receives 99% aid out of the State fund, it will be deemed to be not wholly maintained by the State and therefore religious instructions can be given in that institution. Such as Benaras Hindu University, which is administered by the State, there is no prohibition to give religious instruction.

In the Eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution Sanskrit has been recognised as one of the languages of

Article 351 further directs that for the development of Hindi wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily the basis should be on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

Sanskrit is a dead language and is not a spoken language in any part of India. The only basis of Sanskrit is that it is the language of Hindu religious scripture. The framers of Indian Constitution included Sanskrit as a recognised language in the eighth schedule of the Constitution with the object of pleasing the majority section of the Indian people whose religion is deeply connected with Sanskrit and secondly by incorporating Sanskrit as a recognised language in the Constitution, State money can be freely given for the development of Sanskrit, which in turn with such huge state money will be able to maintain all Hindu religious Institutions and propagation of Hindu religion through the medium of Sanskrit.

The Indian national flag clearly depicts the religious and cultural sentiments of Hinduism. 'The Asoka Chakra', which was originally the symbol of Hinduism and subsequently it was also adopted by Emperor Asoka. After the elimination of Buddhist from India the Asoka Chakra lost its Buddhist character and it became the sole symbol of Hinduism and therefore Asoka Chakra was adopted as Hindu religious symbol in the centre of tricoloured Indian National Flag. In India Hindu religious sentiment and Hindu culture are given prominence in every sphere of public life. The All India Radio devotes more than 50% of its time in Hindu devotional songs, Bhajan and Kirtan every day. In every Sunday, the famous Indian musician Pankaj Mallick begins his radio music class with recitation from Hindu religious scriptures. The Indian cultural missions, which are sent abroad depict, only the Hindu cultural life from the Epics of Ramayan and Mahabharat. After independence India refuses to grant Visas even to Christian Missionaries from Common Wealth countries. Towards the middle of 1973 Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India visited Canada and addressed the Canadian Parliament beginning her speech in English, she switched on to French and concluded speech with recitation from the Rig-Veda. No one in India felt that recitation from the Rig-Veda by a Head of the Government in her official capacity in a foreign Parliament the Indian secularism had been violated, because it is a policy matter of the Government to reflect Hinduism in every sphere of public life and epics of Ramayan and Mahabharat and Upanishad in every sphere of cultural life of India. In India all citizens irrespective of their caste, creed and religion are addressed officially as 'Sree' and 'Namaste'. Even though 'Sree' and 'Namaste' symbolise

Hindu religion and Hindu culture all citizens irrespective of caste, creed and religion are compelled to use 'Sree' and 'Namaste' in their public life.

PATTERN OF SECULARISM IN ENGLAND, AMERICA AND OTHER EUROPEAN & ASIAN COUNTRIES

In England the Church of England is officially recognised as an established Church of England and the Crown of England is the Supreme Head of this Church and the patron of all clergy within the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, there are many political disabilities attached to Roman Catholic and other Churches in England. Under Act of Settlement, 1701 Roman Catholics and those who marry Roman Catholics are excluded from the British Throne. The State has accepted the Protestant Anglican Church as a religious body truly reflecting the Christian faith and special legal status has been given to that Church.

The church of England maintains religious courts throughout England and it has its own parliament. English kings, queens, princes and princesses must undergo their marriages through church. They can not contract marriage outside the church law. Church of England does not recognise divorce. Throughout England Sunday is observed as Sabbath day. All theatres and wine shops are closed on that day. Coronation of the king is a religious ceremony and must be performed by the Church. In educational institutions, such as Inn's of Court religious sermons are given ending with the... .. Jesus Christ our Lord. Oath is given in christian religious forms. The national anthem of England is 'God save the king'; the christian religion and spirit are reflected in it. The flag

of England bears the sign of cross which is a christian religious symbol.

The National flags of many secular countries in Europe, such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Switzerland, Dominican Republic and Australia bear the sign of cross which symbolises the Christian religion. Even the world's largest humanitarian organisation has a Christian symbol of 'Red Cross', both in its flag and in its title.

In America, the Christian religion was always recognised in the administration of the common law and so far as that law Continues to be the law of the land, the fundamental principles of religion must continue to be recognised in the same cases and to the same extent.

THE CONSTITUTION OF ITALIAN REPUBLIC

Article 7 : The State and the Catholic Church are, each in its own order, independent and sovereign. Their relationship are regulated by the Latecan Pacts.

CONSTITUTION OF FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

PREAMBLE

Conscious of its responsibility before God and before man.....

E I R E

Article 44(1)2

The State recognises the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens.

BURMA, Article 21(1)

The State recognises the special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens of the Union of Burma.

In most of the European countries Christian parties play a leading role in the political life of the country and there is no prohibition on religious parties in Europe from taking part in active politics.

POLITICAL SEPARATION OF FORMER EAST PAKISTAN FROM THE REST OF PAKISTAN AND EMERGENCE OF BANGLADESH AS A SOVEREIGN STATE

The separation on political, economic, cultural linguistic and religious basis is not a new phenomena. History recorded such phenomena and still it is a continuous process and it will continue to be so in future also. For example, entire Arabian Peninsula including Egypt and Sudan were under the Sultanate of Turkey. During the first world war most of the Arabian provinces under Turkey were separated politically and emerged as sovereign states even though religion and culture were common. During the Umayyad period Spain was under Umayyad Caliphs. In course of time Muslim Spain (Andalusia) was separated from the rest of Umayyad Empire and after separation not only the Muslim Spain prospered but also it taught the entire Europe the basis of modern science, technology and medicine etc. Muslim Spain continued for eight hundred years as a seat of learning for the entire Europe.

Ireland was only the other day part of Great Britain. But Southern Ireland was separated under the leadership of De-Valera from the rest of United Kingdom even though the religion, language and culture were common. Norway was part of Denmark for four hundred years and thereafter it went under the domination of Sweden for a country. Only in the year 1905 Norway was separated politically from Sweden and emerged as sovereign State.

Here also the religion and culture were common. After Independence of Norway in 1905 the Norwegian People elected a King on the basis of universal adult franchise which is most uncommon in the 20th century.

Unlike the National flags of many countries including India, the National flag of Bangladesh is free from religious and cultural bias of any particular section of people, though it is not necessary that the National flags of secular states should depict secularism. For example, the Ashoka Chakra inserted in the centre of tri-coloured flag of India is not a secular symbol. The Ashoka Chakra has deep connection with Hindu religion and culture even though the same symbol was later on used by Emperor Ashoka. All the national flags of Muslim countries do not display crescent and star. Many Muslim countries have their national flags without crescent and star even though crescent and star is deeply connected as an emblem of Islam. The origin of crescent and star is recorded in the history that while hiding in the cave of Mount Hira, on the 3rd night, the Prophet of Islam mounted the camel followed by his only companion Abu Bakar and both rode into the desert night for Madina. The crescent moon floated in the black sky of the desert at that moment and this is the history of the origin crescent and star as an emblem of Islam.

Many European secular states do not have secular national flags. For example, in the national flags of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Finland, Greece, Australia and England a big Cross is depicted in the national flags of those states. It is within the knowledge of everybody that Cross is a symbol of Christianity.

There are divided opinions in respect of National Anthem of Bangladesh. The socialists are prone to be of opinion that Rabindra Nath Tagore belonged to Bourgeoisie class and himself was a landlord. So the National Anthem of a Bourgeoisie poet can not be the National Anthem of a Socialist country like Bangladesh.

A considerable section of the Muslims of Bangladesh object to the adoption of the said National Anthem of Bangladesh on the following grounds :—

First of all, the National Anthem depicts Mother Bengal as a Goddess like Mother India which the Muslims resent very much because it symbolises idolatry which is against the fundamental basis of Islam, which started as an iconoclastic ideology.

Secondly, it depicts Mahatma Gandhi's view that the common culture as embodied in Tagore has its roots in the philosophy of Upanishads which was the common heritage not only of Bengal but also of the whole of India.

The third schedule of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh lays down the oaths and affirmations to be made by the President, Prime Minister and Chief Justice and other Judges etc. while taking oath of office. The word 'God' is totally excluded from the forms adopted

in the oaths and affirmations; whereas in the Indian Constitution the word 'God' is clearly mentioned in the forms of oaths and affirmations for the President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice and other Judges etc. Similarly in England and other European countries the name of God appears in all forms of oaths.

ARTICLE 38 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Provides that "..... no person shall have the right to form or be a member or otherwise take part in the activities of any communal or other association or union, which in the name or on the basis of any religion has for its object or pursues a political purpose.

This article puts complete ban on religious bodies from taking part in any political activities. But unfortunately in this country all the political parties without exception utilised religion to whip up the people's sentiment for their political ends and in the process all the political parties have rendered greatest disservice to the cause of religion. All the political parties including the present ruling political party of Bangladesh used to maintain a battalion of so-called Ulemas to whip up the public sentiments in favour of parties for the purpose of election particularly. The so-called Ulemas of the respective parties used to distort religion in order to mislead the people in favour of the respective parties. One may still clearly remember that the leader of the present ruling political party of Bangladesh gave a categorical assurance to the people in 1970 election that his party would not enact any law contrary to the injunction of the Quran and the Sunnah. During the liberation struggle of the year 1971 Sadhin

Bangla Betar Kendra also used to maintain a battalion of Ulemas to whip up public sentiments. It is an admitted fact that a section of Ulemas identified themselves with various political parties more on a commercial basis to serve the purpose of their parties. By doing so they have rendered the greatest disservice to the cause of religion. There is a clear warning in the Quran that a time will come when the Quran will be interpreted torn from the context in order to suit one's purpose.

But one can not blame the entire Ulema of the country for such activities. It is not the business of the Ulemas to issue **Fatwa** in favour of any person or a particular political party. The sacred duty of the Ulemas is to teach the people the moral values of life according to the injunctions of the Quran and the Sunnah so that the people can distinguish good from evil, right from wrong. If true teaching of religion is imparted in the society it could uplift without slightest doubt the moral values and philosophy of life based on justice and equality.

With the emergence of the sovereign state of Bangladesh people were amazed to find that all possible attacks came from various quarters to defame religion particularly Islam. Speeches were made to ban Arabic education throughout the country and a tendency grew up to delete the word 'Muslim' from various institutions such as 'Jahangir Nagar Muslim University', Salimullah Muslim Hall, etc. Even Islam was branded as Pakistani Islam. These events led to an unfortunate situation where people became more confused. It is preposterous for anybody to compare Islam with any particular country. One need not look to a particular country

for a definition of Islam. The Holy Quran and Sunnah give clear guidance to the mankind regarding the basic conception of Islam and the relation between man and God. If any interpretation of Islam is given by any country or by any person against the basic principles of Islam as defined in the Holy Quran and Sunnah no Muslim will accept such distorted interpretation. As religion plays a vital part in building up the moral values of life it will not be beneficial for a country to exclude religion from public life. We have seen after Bolshevik revolution in Soviet Russia religion was completely abolished on the pretext that it is the creation of Bourgeoisic class and as a result they abolished all moral values of religion including the ban on prohibited degrees. This had for some time in Russia a free society and the Russian society degraded themselves to such an extent that the Soviet Government had to re-impose ban on the prohibited degrees in the name of morality. So one can not exlude totally the necessity of religious body from public life which works at a prop to the society.

If we examine the Indian constitution which orally claims to be secular we find that article 19 of the Indian Constitution gave a full freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association and thought, freedom of assembly. Under the protection of this article of the Constitution religious bodies like Hindu Mohashava, Janasangh, R.S.S., Ram Rajya Parisad, Siv Sena are allowed to function in the public life of the country freely without let or hindrance from any quarter. No one can deny that these religious bodies played havoc in public life and inspite of that they have been given full freedom in the country for the propagation of their political conviction in public life. Indian Congress leaders were fully alive and conscious that the

Indian people are deeply religious and they will not tolerate any nonsense from the Congress Government. It is curious to mention that when the Indian top communist leaders die full religious formalities are observed which runs contrary to the concept of communism.

In other European secular countries also no religious bodies are banned from taking part in public life. In England Roman Catholic parties and Protestant parties are at logger-heads with each other and still they function in public life. In Germany, in Italy, in Greece and many other European countries Christian Democratic parties and other Christian parties play a vital role in the political life of the respective countries.

The principle behind allowing religious parties for taking part in public life is that no Government can run a country in orderly manner by ignoring the hopes and aspirations of the majority section of the people and they are bound to respect the wishes of the majority section of the people and their religious sentiments.

Similarly there is a great confusion in respect of culture. According to Mahatma Gandhi, the culture of Bengal as depicted by Tagore has its root in the Upanishads. Can we assume the culture of the majority people of Bangladesh has its root on Upanishad? The history of Bengali literature from 1920 to 1947 was a battle of culture between Hindus and Muslims. Hindu writers always used to stress that the culture of Bengali Muslims is the same as that of the Hindus, which had its roots in the Upanishads. Muslim writers used to resent to such definition of culture. The arguments put forward by the Muslim writers of Bengal

are that there are lots of similarities between Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims in respect of customs, habits, dress, food, etc., but so far culture is concerned, when the Muslims gave up idolatry and accepted Islam as a philosophy of life they dissociated from all cultural aspects based on idolatry and Upanishad. A section of people after emergence of Bangladesh are confusing the issue of culture in such a manner that the majority section of the people are dismayed and dejected. They brand Iqbal, Sadi, Ferdousi Hafiz, Rumi, Jami, Nizami, Khayyam, Amir Khasru, Mirza Galib as non-Bengali and their writings and literature are alien to Bengali culture and as a result the name of Allama Iqbal has been effaced from everywhere. Let us take the case of Nazrul Islam. Many of his writings and poems reflect the back-ground of Hindu culture and some of his works and poems at the fag end of his poetic life depict the back-ground of Islamic history and culture; but to the utter disappointment of the majority people of Bangladesh, one finds that the works and poems of Nazrul having back-ground on Islamic history and culture have been discarded in all public functions including Bangladesh Betar. The reason for such elimination is that Nazrul introduced some foreign Arabic and Persian words associated with nostalgia for long lost glory of Islam in his works and poems, which are regarded as contrary to the conception of Bengali culture by the upstart enthusiasts without any cultural moorings whatsoever. So we hear no more both in public function and in Bangladesh Betar songs and Gazals like—

“বাজিছে নাকাড়া, হাঁকে নকীবের তদ্ব্য,
 হৃদিশিয়ার ইসলাম, ডুবে তব সদ্ব্য!”
 কাঁদিয়া জানায় মুসলিম
 ফরিয়াদ ইয়া ইলাহী

“ফাগ কর মওলা মদিনার
উম্মত তোমার গুণাহগার কাঁদে

“উক্ষীষ কোরানের, হাতে তেগ আরবীর,
দুনিয়াতে নত নয় মদুসলিম কারো শির।
তবে শোন্ ঐ শোন্ বাজে কোথা দামামা,
শম্শের হাতে নাও, বাঁধো শিরে আমামা।”

“বাজিছে দামামা বাধরে আমামা
শির উঁচু করি মদুসলমান,
দাওয়াত এসেছে নয় জমানার
ভাঙ্গা কেল্লায় উড়ে নিশান
মুখে কলেমা হাতে তলোয়ার
বুকে ইসলামী জোশ দ্বর্বার
হৃদয়ে লইয়া এস্ক আল্লার
চল আগে চল বাজে বিশান’
ভয় নাই তোর গলায় তাবীজ
বাধা যে রে তোর পাক কোরান।”

For writing such poems and Gazals the allegation against him is that he has also violated the chastity of Bengali Language.

People of Bangladesh are very grateful indeed to the Prime Minister and the Government of Bangladesh that at the fag end of the life of the ailing poet the Government was generous enough to provide him with a comfortable house and other amenities. Why Nazrul was so long neglected the reasons to be pondered upon. Primarily Kazi Nazrul Islam is an Indian national so far law is concerned even though it is a generally accepted principle that poets have no nationality; they belong to humanity.

Calcutta was a place where poet Nazrul was associated with all cultural and literary bodies and in fact Calcutta still commands a dominant position as a seat of Bengali language and literature. One simply ponders why Nazrul was so neglected there for the last 25 years? Why financial help from this country was always sought for the maintenance of the ailing poet and why money had to be raised from this country to send the ailing poet to Europe for treatment?

Even by writing many poems having back-ground on Upanishad, Ramayan and Mahabharat he was neglected in the place, where he was born, brought up, suffered enough during his early days and was connected with all literary giants and organisations. If answer to these questions are given in true perspective and back-ground it will not be palatable to those who are trying to confuse the concept of culture in Bangladesh.

Similarly in the case of Michael Madhusudhan who revolutionised Bengali literature and who enriched the Bengali language and whose works and poems reflected the ideals of Upanishad and epics of Ramayan and Mahabharat had to die in a charitable hospital without food, medicine and proper care. The reasons for such heartless treatment to this great son of Bengal are known to every body.

Culture is not an abstract thing; it is deeply connected with man, his tradition, his race, customs and many other factors. In order to trace the origin of Bengali and Bengali culture one is to refer the history, the evolution of races and culture in the Indian subcontinent.

The Indian Sub-continent is an abode of vast collection of people who differ from one another in physical characteristics, language and culture more widely than the peoples of Europe. Among them the three primary ethnographical divisions of mankind the Caucasian, the white type, the Mongolian, the yellow type and the Ethiopian, the black type are all represented in Indian sub-continent, the first two by various races and the last by the inhabitants of Andaman Islands. Four of the great families of human speech, the Austric, the Tibeto Chinese, the Dravidian and the Indo-European are directly represented among the living languages of Indian sub-continent. The fifth great family, the Semitic which has been introduced by Muslim conquerors in historical times, has through the medium of Arabic and Persian greatly modified some of the Indian vernaculars. The Dravidians has not been traced with certainty beyond the limits of the Indian sub-continent. The impact of the Muslim invasion on Indian sub-continent was altogether different from that produced by the previous invaders of Indian sub-continent. Hinduism was able to absorb and assimilate in its social fabric the Greek, Aryans, Saka, Kushan and Huns but Hinduism could not absorb the Muslims. Their culture not only remained distinct from other throughout but also others were greatly influenced by Muslim culture.

Seven geographical regions form the basis for the ethnographical classification of the peoples of Indian sub-continent. Of the seven regions one is the Mongol Dravidian or Bengali type in Bengal and Orissa. The head of the people is broad, complexion dark hair on face usually plentiful, stature medium, nose medium. This type is regarded as blend of Dravidian and Monogoloid elements with a strain

of Indo-Aryan blood in the higher twice born Orthodox Brahmins.

ORIGIN OF THE BENGALIS

Dr. R. C. Majumder, the eminent Historian traces the origin of the Bengalis in his Book "The History of Bengal" Vol. I as follows :

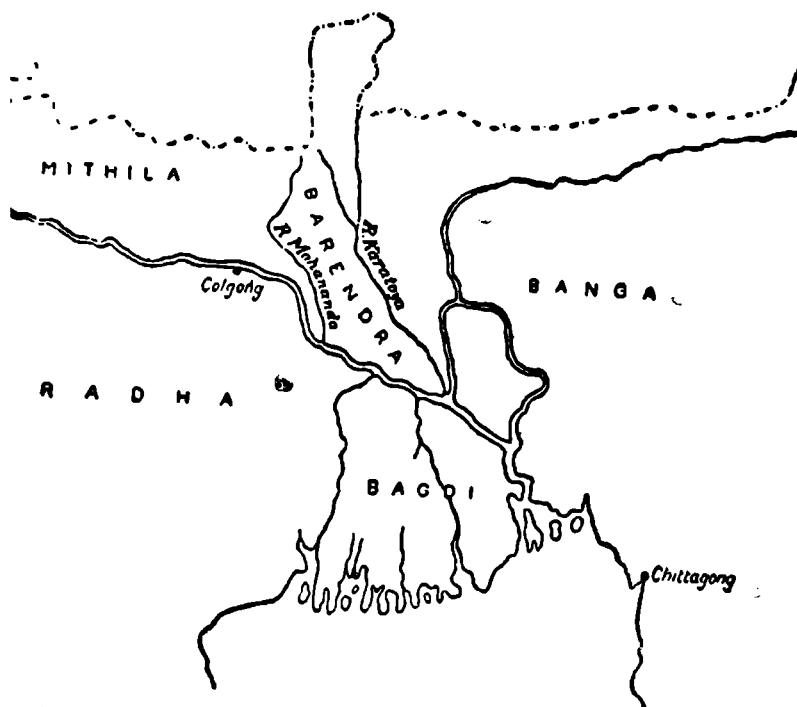
"It has been noted that deprecatory references in Vedic literature indicate that the primitive people in Bengal were different in race and culture from the Vedic Aryans. Broadly speaking we can distinguish two elements in the people of Bengal, one consisting of the primitive tribes like Kols, Sabaras, Pulindas, Hari, Dom, Chandal, the others designated as the Mlechchhas.

The former groups are representative of the earliest inhabitants of Bengal and the majority, if not the whole of them were probably descended from the Non-Aryan people of the Rig-Vedic age".

The Bengal Brahmins stand out prominently as the only caste in Bengal which shows definite evidence of resemblance with the Punjab and also a substantial amount of resemblance with upper castes outside Bengal".

Before the Muslim conquest of India Bengal was divided into five regions (1) Radha, the country west of the Hugli and south of the Ganges, (2) Bagdi, the delta of Ganges

and Brahmaputra, (3) Banga, the country to the east of the delta, (4) Barandra, the country to the north of Padma and between the Mahananda rivers, (5) Mithila, the country west of the Mahananda.



SKETCH MAP OF THE ANCIENT DIVISIONS OF BENGAL

Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khiliji conquered the south-eastern parts of Mithila, Barandra, the northern district of Radha and the north-western district of Bagdi. The Muslim rule was long confined to this territory but was subsequently extended into Banga and the western part of Radha. The general attitude of the Muslim rulers to their Hindu subjects of those parts was of tolerance.

With the introduction of Islam in these regions the oppressed class who were dominated for thousands of years by the twice born class Brahmins were simply charmed by the beauty and simplicity of Islam which rejects idolatry, abolished class, race, caste and colour distinctions between man and man. An immense wave of social and religious revolution swept the regions and the people of those regions adopted Islamic creed enmasse by rejecting idolatry caste system and culture, based on Upanishad. Since then Islamic creed and culture became the fundamental basis of the philosophy of life of the majority people of these regions of Bengal.

In India all citizens irrespective of caste creed and religion are bound to prefix 'Sree' before their name and use salutation 'Namaste' in social life. 'Sree' and 'Namaste' are completely identified with Hindu culture and religion, but the secular India thought it fit to compel the followers of other religions to accept the same even though that is contrary to their religion and culture.

In Bangladesh Muslims greet each other with "Assalamu-Alaikum" and prefix before their names 'Janab' and the Hindus of Bangladesh greet each other with 'Namaste' and prefix 'Sree' before their names. This gives enough proof that Muslim culture and Hindu culture are quite different even in their outward behaviour. As Bangladesh is a secular state Hindus have every right legally and morally to retain their culture and tradition and no law can force them to change their culture.

Similarly it applies to Muslims also. If this is a fact then it goes without saying and controversy that both of them are

followers of different culture based on their respective religion.

All of us remember that when Mrs Indira Gandhi visited Canada during the middle part of 1973 she addressed Canadian parliament as the head of the Government of India and she began her speech in English, in the middle switched on to French and concluded her speech with profuse references and hymns from RIG-VEDA. No one in India felt that by her recitations from Hindu religious scriptures RIG-VEDA the secularism of India had been violated.

Had it been the case of an official representative of Bangladesh quoting from the Holy Quran in such circumstances, what would have been his position? One can only imagine without making any comment.

In India two Universities, Benares Hindu University and Alighrah (Muslim) University are administered by the Govt. of India but the secular State of India deemed it fit to delete the name 'Muslim' from Alighrah University and also made regulations to take away the Alighrah University from the hands of the Muslims; whereas the Benares Hindu University was not only left untouched but also millions of public money have been pumped in for the development of Hindu culture and religion through the medium of Benares Hindu University. Similarly the Govt. Hindu school of Calcutta which is wholly managed by the Govt. still retains the name 'Hindu'. The two private Islamic Universities of Deoband and Sahranpur were practically ruined by the secular Govt. of India which once were the seats of Islamic learning and culture throughout India and abroad. Just after partition of India the name of the

famous Calcutta Islamia College was changed and was renamed as Central College.

Subsequently it was again renamed as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad College.

Muslims to their horror found that a vilification campaign was started against Islam in Bangladesh by a powerful section. The name 'Muslim' was removed from many institutions and a campaign was started to ban Arabic education and so on. These phenomena dampened the spirit of Majority section of people in Bangladesh. It is very painful to mention that some one placed in no less a position than a Dean of Faculty of Arts (Department of Bengali) of the leading University of Bangladesh attempted to vilify Millat-e-Rasul in a most undignified manner in an article published in daily 'Bangabarta' dt. 16th December, 1973.

In the article the writer used most undignified and obnoxious terms to slander Millat-e-Rasul.

A portion of the article of the writer is reproduced below for the information of the readers.

“মুসলমানদের আবরণে যদিও অনুপস্থিত, কিন্তু অন্তরে যেন ঐ স্বাধর্ম চেতনাজাত মধ্যযুগীয় গঙ্ডালিকা স্বভাব একটু প্রবল। তারা কথায় কথায় মুসলিম স্বজাত্য গৌরবে উৎফুল্ল হয়ে উঠে দুনিয়ার যে কোন যুগের ও যে কোন মুসলিমের বা মুসলিম দেশ ও রাষ্ট্রের সঙ্গে মমত্বের ও আপনত্বের বন্ধন অনুভব করে। বাহ্যত এটি সদগুণ ও ইসলামের দান বলে মনে হয় বটে, কিন্তু খুঁটিয়ে খুঁটিয়ে দেখলে বোঝা যায় হীনমণ্যের কাঙাল চিন্তে এর উদ্ভব ও স্থিতি তাই তারা দেশান্তরে ও কালান্তরে স্বজাতি ও স্বজাতির গৌরব খুঁজে বেড়ায়।

আজকের দিনে খ্রীষ্টানরা কিংবা বৌদ্ধরা তাদের স্বজাতির রাষ্ট্র সংখ্যায় গৌরব প্রকাশ করে না; কিংবা আপদে-বিপদে স্বধর্মীর কাছে করুণা আবেদন জানায় না। কেবল মুসলমানদের মধ্যেই এ প্রবণতা প্রবল তাই স্বদেশী

মুসলিমদের স্বদেশের নয় বিদেশী স্বধর্মীর গৌরব স্তগ্যাবিষ্ট তৃতীয় ছাগ-শিশুর উদার আনন্দ স্মরণ করিয়ে দেয়।”

We have been observing for some time that a class of writers either wilfully or at the behest of some body indulging in a systemic manner to vilify Islam in order to create confusion in the country for the interest of their own invisible masters. Writing and publishing slanderous and libellous articles against any religion or religious faith whatsoever will lead to further chaos and confusion in the country, which will ultimately benefit the enemies of the country. Further, no one in the country has any right constitutional, moral, legal or any right whatsoever to vilify another religion or offend the religious sentiments of any section of the people of the country. . .

Let there be no mistake that the people of this country will not tolerate vilification of any religion or any religious beliefs by any person how highly placed he may be. Every religion is dear and sacred to its followers. Islam does not encourage any religious intolerance which is amply depicted in the annals of Islamic history. The Holy Quran enjoins upon the mankind strictly that there must not be any compulsion in matters of religion.

The Millat-e-Rasul is sinequanon with Islamic faith and creed. The Islamic Millat is based on fundamental principles of the unity of Allah and the finality of the Prophet. The extraordinary and remarkable personality of the Prophet of Islam provides a connecting link between the various loyalties, characteristics of the fundamental polity of Islam. It is this concentration of loyalties that transforms the Musalmans into a wel-defined unified Millat representing a

message of hope for humanity. The Prophet is the guide and unifier of the Muslim Millat. The Millat owes its being to him and through him the Musalmans are one and possess oneness of purpose. The Millat is a unified association of individual Musalmans, animated by a strong desire for unity. The unity of the Millat is the outcome of the religion of humanity which was revealed to the Holy Prophet. The object of the Prophethood of Muhammad (S.M.) is to establish the fundamental unity of mankind on the basis of equality, liberty and fraternity. It is a message of human equality in social status and legal rights.

The Prophet taught the world lessons in equality, liberty and fraternity long before the architects of the French Revolution repeated these words. Every Musalman is a trustee of the Millat and the bond of love is the source of liberty for all. The unshakable faith in the unity of Allah and Prophethood of Muhammad (S.M.) binds all the Musalmans together and this is the true Islamic spirit of a practical brotherhood.

It is most unfortunate that instead of fighting the common enemy, that is, poverty and exploitation, peoples attention are diverted towards disappointment and frustration. For any act of vandalism or bigotry of an individual the whole society is branded as communal. Unlike our so-called secular neighbour, the people of Bangladesh buried the monster of communalism long long ago. By offending the sentiments of the people no country can prosper. Before it is too late every body should try to understand the basic facts, which are menacing the country and agitating the minds of the people.

The confusion and the anomaly of thoughts and ideas have been cropped up due to lack of understanding of the different and distinct culture in its true perspective and some are, of course, designed with a set purpose. Culture is not an abstract thing. It is deeply connected with man, his tradition, his race, religion, customs and many other factors. Therefore in order to trace the history of Bengali speaking people one is to refer first of all the origins of the Bengalees, National & political identities of the Bengalees and the culture of the Bengali speaking people.

So far the origin of Bengalees is concerned Dr. R. C. Majumder, the eminent historian of the sub-continent has elaborately dealt in his book 'History of Bengal Volume I' which has already been quoted here. The origin of Bengalees which Dr. R. C. Majumder referred in his book is in relation to the people of Bengal before the introduction of Islam in this region. If it is so, then the question arises who are the Mohammedans of Bengal? What were they before the eventual battle of plassey which was fought on the bank of Bhagirathi in 1757 A.D. ?

In order to find the correct answer to these questions one is to unfold the history of Bengal from 1203 A.D. to present day. In 1203 A.D. Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji conquered Bengal. Except the eastern and southern district, that is Banga and southern part of Bagdi he became master of the whole country. But there is evidence that as early as the eighth century A.D. Arab traders used to trade with Eastern Bengal using the port of Chittagong and many of the Arab traders settled in Eastern Bengal particularly in Chittagong. The wealth of Bengal described as 'hell well stocked with bread'

(Duzakh Pur Az Nan) attracted these Arab traders and scholars in search of market and high employment in Bengal.

From the conquest of Bengal in 1203 A.D. by Bakhtiar Khilji during the reign of Qutubuddin Aibak the then Emperor of Delhi, to the battle of Plassy in 1757 A.D. and the defeat of Nowab Sirajuddaulah in the reign of Alamgir II and the establishment of East India Company's Government or during a period of nearly 600 years-Bengal was ruled by various dynasties Khilji, Ghori, Pathan, Mughal, Shaikh, Saiyid and Tatar. Some of them were independent Sultans, while others were Subadars of Delhi Emperors; but many were nominally subject to the Delhi sovereigns. These conquerors and masters, Sultans and Nazims of Bengal whose capitals were at Lakhnnavati, Gour, Tanda, Dacca and Murshidabad were accompanied by or compelled to bring persons of their own race and supporters of their own dynasties. The last of Mohammedan families that had been pouring in, ever since the invasion of Bengal in 1203 A.D. may be roughly divided under the following heads :-

First : Persons who came to fight the battles or support the rule of their own race and dynasties, or to take part in internecine conflict and internal feuds. These contest and conflict were, at times very keen and protracted.

Secondly : Civilians or those who were employed as Qazis, Muftis, writers, poets and artisans who lived with the bounties of prince and princess.

Thirdly : A large number of other eminent men illustrious by birth and renowned in literature and science, some times scions of sovereigns of Asia, who were compelled to leave

the country of their birth and fame, viz, the shores of the Oxus and the valley of the Euphrates and to come and live in the lower province of Bengal for the sake of greater security or in quest of fortune.

Fourthly . Various families-warriors of renown, ecclesiastics and preaches who were banished and sent away as an Imperial policy to remote places especially to Bengal, some times rebellious lords with their retinue took shelter in the swampy tracts of lower Bengal. Many others were forced to come to Bengal on account of famine in other places.

If one should turn to the pages of Firishta, Badayuni, Akbarnama, Ain-i-Akbari, Tabaqat-i-Nasiri or take the trouble of studying the accounts of various Mohammadan families of Bengal in the Farmans, Sanads, Parwanas or in the inscriptions or tombstones, mosques or serais one would at once come to the conclusion that almost the entire Mohammadan population of Bengal had been recruited from the above sources. There are also a considerable number that are the offspring of inter-marriages with local population or convert to Islam. If we examine the original stock from which the Bengal Mohammadens of the day have been drawn, we find that on account of the long administration of Bengal by Turanian or Iranian, Tatar rulers of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Baluchistan the majority of the civilians as well as the military with the rank and file, that came to Bengal were their own race or class. Even the Arabs-Saiyids and Shaikhs of Bengal were forced to employ as a matter of policy large number of people of Afghan and Turkish origin, who gradually settled in Bengal. These sources referred above represent the majority Muslim population of Bengal of the day.

Sir, Jadu Nath Sarkar, the eminent historian of the Indian sub-continent records his finding in the 2nd volume of History of Bengal as follows :

“Islam in Bengal experienced a new birth in consequence of the Mughal conquest. Apart from the highly cultured subadars and generals some of them of the royal blood and Chancellors and Secretaries who were deputed to Bengal in regular official succession and who brought into local Muslim society the fresh breath of a higher culture from the imperial capital, numbers of scholarly Muslims from upper India made their homes in this rich province (Bengal). The great increase of oceanic communication between Bengal and the western lands due to the vast expansion of our sea-borne trade in the middle of 17th century, tempted cultured Persians-scholars, physicians, traders to come and settle in Bengal. A voyage from Bandar Abbas or Basra to Hughly was much cheaper and easier than the land journey across upper India wandering saints and preaches used to visit Bengal long before the Mughal conquest. But this stream became ampler in volume after the annexation of the province to the Empire of Delhi. In the wake of the officials and troops who marched from the west to the east regularly came religious teachers, sufis philosophers religious mendicants calling themselves darvises and auliyas Muslim society in Bengal derived full advantage from this infusion of fresh light from the west. What the Vaishnav religion did for the Hindus of Bengal, was done for their Muslim neighbours by the Mughal conquest. This province (Bengal) was intimately joined to the general religious and cultural movements of the rest of India, its narrow isolation was broken

Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar in the same volume of the History of Bengal exploded the myth of Bara Bhuiyas (12 Bhuiyans) of Bengal. The observation of Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar is reproduced below from the History of Bengal Volume II.

“A false provincial patriotism has led modern Bengali writers to glorify the Bara Bhuiyas of Bengal as the champions of national independence against foreign invaders. They were nothing of the sort. Firstly they were nearly all of them upstarts, who had in their own persons or one generation earlier-grabbed at some portion of the dissolving Karrani kingdom of Bengal and set up as masterless Rajas in their different corners of the country, especially in the inaccessible regions of the sea-coast in Khulna and Baqarganj or beyond the mighty barriers of the Brahmaputra in Dacca and the still remoter jungles of North Mymensingh and Sylhet. These mushroom captains of plundering bands have been likened to the hereditary chieftains of the Sisodia and Ratharclans of Rajputna who fought the Mughals in defence.

The height of absurdity is reached when our dramatists call Pratapaditya of Jessor as the counter-part of Maharana Pratp Singh of Mewar. It is therefore, necessary to debunk the Bengali “hero” by turning the dry light of history on him. His father was Srihari, a Kayastha writer in the service of Daud Karrani, who rose to be that chief’s confident after the murder of the worthy wazir Ludi Khan (Ak, iii, 172). On the fall of Daud, Srihari fled away with his own wealth and the Government treasure in his custody and set up for himself in the extreme south of the Khulna district to which the sea was very much closer then now. In

this marshy land intersected by a maze of channels, he built a home for his family and a safe refuge for fugitives from the advancing tide of invasion. The ex-amla took the grandiloquent title of the Indian Charlemagne,-Maharaj Vikramaditya and could give his son and heir a no lesser title than Pratapaditya,-reminiscent of the official designations of the great Gupta Emperors of antiquity. Pratapaditya never once defeated any Mughal army in pitched battle; his son and general Udayaditya fled at the first sign of a losing naval battle (at Salka), and Pratapdity himself tamely submitted to the Mughal general without holding out till he was assured of safety to life and honour. If we call such a man "the Pratap Singh of Bengal" then we must admit that the great hero of Haldighat in his transit to Bengal.

Had suffered a sea-change

Into something mean and strange.

As for Kedar Rai, his son Chand Rai allied himself with the Afghan freebooters who had broken out at Orissa and were ravaging South Bengal, but he was killed in making a treacherous attack on his dear allies. The father, in a wiser alliance with 'Isa Khan, fought well and died in action. But where was the nation in all this?

We must not confound the Bara Bhuiyas with the Rajahs of Tipperah, Kamrup and Kuch Bihar, who were representatives of long established tribal chieftains. Pratapaditya and Kedar Rai, Isa Khan and Anwar Ghazi were not tribal heads, nor scions of any old and decayed house. They were at best bloated zamindars who would have been glad to save their estates by paying annual revenue if the Karrani dynasty had not been subverted and a strong Sultan

like Sulaiman had filled the throne of Bengal. The eclipse of royal authority at the centre of the Government of Bengal was the opportunity of these usurpers of neighbours' territories ; they had their brief day in the twilight between the setting Afghan Kingship and the rising Mughal empire in Bengal ; and when the Mughal power came out, under Islam Khan, in full splendour, they vanished into the obscurity from which they had risen.

If the Mughals who came in 1574 must be called foreign invaders, so were the Karranis who came in 1560 and the Lohanis, who were mere servants of the Karranis."

Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar records in the same History of Bengal volume II how East Bengal's isolation was broken.

"We know really nothing definite about the state of civilisation and the condition of the people in East Bengal in the Hindu period. There were no doubt rich courts with a developed culture and art of their own in the southern and more civilised portion of it, such as Dacca, Comilla and Chittagong. But no detailed or clear account of these capitals, not even complete genealogies of their kings, have come down to us. As for the common people, especially those living in the back villages, the huge fertile sandbanks (char-land), and the deltaic swamps of Baqarganj and Khulna, their unceasing strife with the capricious forces of nature and labour to wrest a bare livelihood from the soil, left them no leisure to develop any noticeable civilisation, art or commerce.

But one thing seems certain. The force of Aryan colonisation (however meagre in volume) and Aryan cul-

ture (however diluted with Dravidian cult and culture) was all but exhausted when they reached the country east of the Brahmaputra and old Tista rivers and north of an east-west line drawn through the middle of the Pabna district. In these regions the people up to the foot-holds of the hills were Mongoloid by race, spirit-worshippers by religion and speakers of many local dialects, which had no written literature and were foreign to the literary Bengali of Gaud, Varendri and Rarh. By the inexorable force of geography, the people of West Bengal, especially in the Gangetic valley were more largely and more deeply subject to the Aryan or Aryo-Dravidian influence that filtered through Anga (Bhagalpur) than the natives of East Bengal. In an earlier age Buddhism had dominated the country from Kamrup to Chittagong, and evidence of it is still to be found in literary reference and antiquarian remains. But at the time of the Muslim conquest (1230 A.D.) and for some centuries before it, the religion of the masses in East Bengal and indeed of many of the gentry too—was Tantrik Hinduism, which could be hardly distinguished from spirit-worship and magic of later Buddhism, as still found in Tibet. In the Hindu period, Sanskrit scholars, Hindu physicians, and eminent Brahman priests, from the west freely crossed the river barrier and settled in East Bengal used to visit the Courts and famous shrines of West Bengal. But they represented only the thin upper crust of society and were concentrated in the large towns and rich monasteries of Bangladesh. But on the fall of Nadia and Gaur to the Muslims even this little interchange of cultures ceased. For some time after, the mass of the people east of the Tista and the Brahmaputra remained Hindus, but their religion

was not a kin to that of the Hindus of Gaur or Rarh. They had no learned Brahman priesthood, no Sanskrit scriptures, no Vedic ritual. Their worship was almost everywhere conducted by illiterate animistic priests or more properly witch-doctors.

Despised and neglected by the educated Aryan priesthood with no resident Brahman clergy to look after their religious instruction or conduct their rites properly the Hindu masses of East Bengal remained as sheep without a spiritual shepherd, just like their Mongolid Buddhistic brethren of Kamrup and Arakan. Hence, when Shah Jalal (of Sylhet) and other missionaries of the Crescent arrived to preach Islam to them, no worthy priests of Hinduism came forth to accept the challenge, and the masses of East Bengal were easily converted to Islam en masse from spirit-worship (call it later Buddhism or Tantrik Hinduism as you please, these are only two names for the same thing). This is the underlying meaning of the legends still current about the early missionaries of Islam in Sylhet and Rajgir (south Bihar) and their success in defeating the local Hindu priests (called Jogis) by superior miracle-working power.

Even after the last Hindu royal house in Dacca had been extinguished, the Islamic power in East Bengal was often at war with the Islamic power of Lakhnauti or Satgaon.

This isolation was finally and fully broken when Mughal rule was established in Bengal and that province was made a normal subah of the Empire. The trans-Brahmaputra country was henceforth closely connected westwards with

the rest of Bengal and the whole of upper India. The civilising of East Bengal (if I may be permitted the expression) began with Islam Khan's conquest from Dacca as his base, and the process was completed when the later viceroys made that city the seat of their Government. But we had to wait for Murshid Quli Khan before Mymensingh and Sylhet, Barisal and Jessore were made regular tribute-paying districts of the Bengal Subah."

The second question is to be dealt with is the national and political identities of the Bengalees. Bangladesh, West Bengal and part of Assam are the home land of Bengali speaking people. Before the partition of Indian sub-continent into Pakistan and India the Bengali-speaking people of East Bengal, West Bengal, North Bengal and Assam used to identify themselves politically and nationally as Indians and not as Bengalees. After the partition of the country the Bengali-speaking people of former East Pakistan used to identify themselves politically and nationally as Pakistanis but their counter-parts in West Bengal and Assam continued to identify themselves as Indians as before. After emergence of the sovereign state of Bangladesh the Bengali-speaking people of Bangladesh for the first time in the history identified themselves politically and nationally as Bengalees and the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh conferred every citizen of Bangladesh an honour wherein under article 6 of the constitution all citizens of Bangladesh shall be known as Bengalees. By such recognition by the constitution, Bengalees as a nation got a place in the world history for the first time.

The Bengali-speaking people of West Bengal and Assam still continue to identify themselves as Indians and not Bengalees. After emergence of Bangladesh when Mr. Siddharta Shankar Roy, Chief Minister of West Bengal visited this country many pressmen asked him a question whether he is a Bengalee politically and nationally but Mr. Roy refused to identify himself as Bengalee, his flat answer was that he is an Indian.

So we find the Bengali-speaking people of Bangladesh identify themselves nationally and politically as Bengalees and the Bengali-speaking people of West Bengal and Assam identify themselves politically and nationally as Indians. Therefore, if one is to write the national history of Bengali-speaking people he is to confine himself in Bangladesh only excluding Bengali-speaking people of Assam and West Bengal. Hence the entire glory of Bengali nationalism is shared by the Bengali-speaking people of Bangladesh only.

The third question is what is the culture of the Bengali-speaking people of Bangladesh? Is the culture of the Bengali-speaking people of Bangladesh, West Bengal and Assam same? Are the Bengali-speaking people of Bangladesh, West Bengal, Assam racially from the same stock and origin?

It has already been referred that culture is deeply connected with man, his race, religion, custom and many other factors. In Bangladesh apart from minor religious followers like Buddhist and Christians, there are two principal religions, Islam and Hinduism. The followers of Islam constitute about 85% of the population of Bangladesh. The

culture of Bengali Muslims is deeply connected with the Holy Quran and Sunnah from where they get inspiration and determine their philosophy of life, ways of living, thoughts, ideas and many other factors.

Similarly the culture of Bengali Hindus is deeply connected with Upanishad, Ramayan, Mahabharat and Sanskrit language from where followers of Hindusm get inspiration and determine philosophy of life, ways of living, thoughts and ideas.

Therefore, the culture of the followers of every religion is sacred to him and no one has any right to show any disrespect to the followers of any culture or try to impose the culture of one upon another which not only violates the normal principles but also the basic principles of secularism as embodied in the constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh

If we analyse the basic principles of Hindu culture we find that the basic factor amongst other is the caste system of the Hindu religion which determines their social, political, economic and religious system. Caste can not be properly understood in isolation from Hinduism, for it is Hinduism that provides caste with its sanctions and gives to the whole system its moral meaning. The philosophy of the Upanishad is commonly called the Veda, implying that it constitutes the final frontier of knowledge. Certainly it proved the center-piece of Hindu Metaphysics, but with and around it developed a whole social, political, economic and religious system, the skeleton of which was caste. The first written reference to any caste appear in Rigveda such

as Ksatriya, Brahmin and Vaisya and there are then found in the latest, tenth book, together with a fourth rank, the Sudra. Both the Mahabharat with its religious climax in the Bhogavadgita and the Ramayana provide abject lessons in the need of every man and woman to follow their individual and caste Dharma. The Mahabharata in one passage gives the colour of the four varna or orders with an accompanying moral and economic explanation of the origin of different castes.

Dr. R. C. Majumder in his history of Bengal vol. I narrated certain restrictions about food and drinking of water amongst the various castes.

“As regards drinking of water, Bhavadeva prescribes penance for all the four castes only for drinking water touched by or kept in the vessel of a chandala. Lighter penance is prescribed for drinking water of a Sudra. The antyaja is defined as a group of seven low castes viz., Rajaka, Chamar, Nata, Varuda, Kaivarta, Meda and Bhilla.”

“As regards food Bhavadeva quotes older authorities prescribing penance for a Brahmana eating food touched by a Chandala or cooked by antyajas, Chandalas, Pukkasas, Kapalika and a number of specified low castes such as Nata, Nartaka, Takshona, Charmakora, Suvornokoro, Sarnadika, Rajaka, Kaivarta and Brahmanas following forbidden vocations. He also quotes a passage from Apostamba prescribing a Krichchha penance for a Brahmana who takes food cooked by a Sudra.”

In the Bhogavad Gita one hears the Lord Krishna says—

“The four castes emanated from me by the different distribution of qualities and action; know me to be the author of them.”....Even the saintly Vivekananda in his book ‘My master’ shows some signs of the same attitude. Swamiji says, “I find it necessary to give some explanation of the religion, the Hindu system. It is all—important to know something about it in order to understand the real significance. The system is woven about the caste order and that is a unique thing for it is sanctioned by religion.” While having profound respect and regard for Hinduism and their culture, the culture of Bengalee speaking Muslims is quite different which originates from similar source, i.e., Holy Quran and Sunna. No Bengali speaking Muslim can agree with Mahatma Gandhi, who described the common culture of Bengal as follows : Gandhiji said, “Since Bengal’s common culture as embodied in Tagore, had its roots in the philosophy of Upanishad which was a common heritage not only of Bengal but also the whole of India.”

It is most respectfully submitted that though the Bengali Muslim have profound regard for Hindu religious scriptures, but they can not accept the statement of Mahatma Gandhi that the culture of Bengali Muslims as embodied in Tagore had its roots in the philosophy of Upanishad.

It is most painful to observe that a section of people are trying to confuse the issue of culture in such a way that there is a thorough resentment amongst the majority section of the Muslims of Bangladesh. In the name of Bengali culture they are trying to thrust upon the Bengali Muslims such culture which is repulsive to the very con-

cept of the culture followed by Bengali Muslims. In doing so they are rendering greatest disservice to the nation and the country.

In America Christians and Jews who live in America as citizens are known politically and nationally as Americans but Jews and Christians though are nationally same but they follow two different culture based on their respective religious philosophy, i.e., Christianity and Judaism. The American jews even go one step further having allegiance to the state of America ; they further owe extra territorial allegiance to the state of Israel. The defence bonds of Israel are sold in America which are largely purchased by the Americans who are the followers of Judaism. Therefore, America, which is the most advanced country in the world could not assimilate Christian and Jewish culture as one culture because the followers of each religion derives their cultural inspiration from their respective religious philosophy.

For the national interest of the country it is most essential that the culture of he followers of every religion should be left undisturbed without trying to impose culture of one upon another which will plunge the country headlong down and will benefit no one except the persons who are out to create confusion in the country. The people should be left undisturbed to develop their own culture according to their tradition, philosophy of life, which originate from their respective religion. Sanskrit is a language of Hindu religious scripture, and Arabic is the language of Muslim religions scripture, that is, Holy Quran. Therefore the cultural aspect of Hinduism is naturally reflected in Bengali

language and literature having mooring in Sanskrit. Similarly the cultural aspect of the Muslim is reflected in Bengali language and literature having moorings in Arabic.

Of late, we have been observing that there is a campaign in the name of Bengali culture that the Arabic words and phrases should be replaced by Sanskrit words, phrases and expressions in Bengali language and literature. Such a tendency has considerably damaged the unity in the country and has created a great confusion in the minds of Muslims of Bangladesh. Since Arabic is the language of the Holy Quran, Bengali Muslims have developed from ages Bengali language and literature by incorporating many Arabic, Persian and Urdu words and phrases in Bengali languages which have not only enriched the Bengali language and literature but also reflected the cultural aspect of their philosophy of life.

Now it is high time that such tendency of creating confusion and the vilification by one against another be brought to an end in the greater interest of the solidarity of the nation. The followers of every religion should be left undisturbed to develop their respective culture and tradition according to the dictates of their religious philosophy and outlook. Attempts to wipe out the expressions organically assimilated in a living language like Bengali are artificial and hence futile and bound to fail.

Instead of indulging in such activities which is detrimental to the national interest all citizens irrespective of caste, creed and religion should unitedly put their efforts for the economic development of the country which will bring prosperity and

the fruits of which could be enjoyed by one and all in the country, because the nation at the present moment, is passing through a very critical phase which is affecting every citizen. High-sounding words of socialism and democracy is falling flat due to lack of united and concerted efforts in the economic sphere and lack of sincerity and honesty of purpose amongst the people who are at the helm of the affairs. These factors have contributed towards retrogression on the dial of the destiny of the nation, Moreover our rulers are permitted to live in glaring extravagance while they make impassioned appeals for extreme sacrifice for establishing socialism in the country. They give directive to the people but their directive more often than not lacks the virtue of example. Socialism in a Mercedes Benz may be eloquent but it seldom conveys impression of sincerity.

Down with corruption, down with smuggling, these are the common cry in the country but corruption in our country has an ancient lineage; it is sanctified by tradition. The author of the Arthashastra, a Mouryan manual of the Government, rather like Machiavelli's "The prince" in its untroubled cynicism might have been writing for the merchants, industrialists and public servants of Bangladesh that "There are about forty ways of embazzlement; what is realised earlier is entered later on; what is realised later is entered earlier and what ought to be realised is not realised".

... .. Certainly his remarks quoted below on Mauryan officials can properly be applied to many public servants including the Administrators of the Republic of Bangladesh.

"Just as it is impossible not to taste the honey or the

poison that finds itself at the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a government servant not to eat up, at least, a bit of the king's revenue. Just as with fish under water it can not possibly be discovered whether they are drinking water or not, so it is impossible to detect Government servants employed on official duties, when helping themselves to money. It is possible to mark the movements of birds flying high up in the sky, but it is not possible to ascertain the secret movements of Government servants."

To call a spade a spade is neither morally wrong nor oversteps the limits of human decency but it incurs displeasure of many, friends & foes, alike.

Allama Iqbal, the great Poet philosopher of the East has rightly said,

درویش خدا مست نہ شرقی ہے نہ غربی
 گھر میرا نہ د لہی نہ اصفہان نہ سمرقند
 کہتا ہوں وہی بات سمجھتا ہوں جسے حق
 نے ابلہ مسجر ہوں نہ تہذیب کا فرزند
 اپنے بھی خفا مجھ سے ہیں بیگنا نے بڑی ناخوش
 میں زہر ہلا ہل کو کبھی کہ نہ سکا قتد

“The God-intoxicated Fakir is neither
of the East nor of the West ;
I belong neither to Delhi nor to
Ispahan nor to Samarkand.
I speak out what I consider to be
truth ;
I am neither fooled by priests nor
by the glitter of modern civilisation ;
Friends and strangers are alike displeased
with me
Why ? because I could never confuse
poison with sugar.”

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APPENDIX I

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, M. A. Ph. D, D. Sc,

Bar-At-Law

On

The Depressed class of India, 1st January, 1931

(Speech delivered at Round Table Conference, London)

Mr. Chairman, I am sure you will readily agree that the task which has fallen upon me to represent the case of the Depressed Classes from the political point of view has come to be considered. The disabilities of the Depressed Classes were mentioned in almost every Despatch that was recorded by the Government of India in connection with the political advancement of the country; but the Despatches only mentioned the difficulties and never attempted to give any solution of those difficulties. The problem was just allowed to rest there. In view of that and in view of other matters namely, that in a Committee consisting of so many members we are only two to voice the grievances of 43 millions of people, and grievances, which the Committee will agree are unparalleled by the case of any other community that exists in India, I submit that the task is really an enormous one,...

Sir, the first observation that I will make is that, although there are various minority communities in India which require political recognition, it has to be understood that the minorities are not on the same plane, that they differ

from each other. They differ in the social standing which each minority occupies vis-a-vis the majority community. We have, for instance the Parsee community, which is the smallest community, it is probably the highest in order of precedences.

On the other hand, if you take the Depressed Classes, they are a minority which comes next to the great Muslim minority in India and yet their social standard is lower than the social standard of ordinary human beings.

Again, if you take the minorities and classify them on the basis of social and political rights, you will find that there are certain minorities which are in enjoyment of social and political rights, and the fact that they are in a minority does not necessarily stand in the way of their full and free enjoyment of those civic rights. But if you take the case of the Depressed Classes, the position is totally different. They have in certain matters no right, and where they have any, the majority community will not permit them to enjoy them.

My first submission to this Committee, then, is that it should realise that although, to use an illustration, the minorities are all in the same boat yet the most important fact to remember is that they are not all in the same class in the same boat; some are travelling in 'A' class, some in 'B' class and some in 'C' and so on. I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that the Depressed classes, though they are a minority and are to that extent in the same boat as other minorities, are not even in 'C' or 'D' class but are actually in the hold.

Starting from that point of view, I agree that, in some respects, the position of the Depressed Classes is similar to that of the other minorities in India. The Depressed Classes, along with the other minorities, fear that under any future constitution of India, by which majority rule will be established and there can be no shadow of doubt that majority rule, will be the rule of the orthodox Hindus there is greater danger of that majority with its orthodox Hindu beliefs and prejudices contravening the dictates of justice, equality and good conscience, there is a great danger that the minorities may be discriminated against either in legislation or administration or in the other public rights of citizenship, and therefore it is necessary to safeguard the position of the minorities in such a manner that the discrimination which is feared shall not take place.

Take the case of employment in the Police or in the Army. In the Government of India Act it is provided that no subject of His Majesty shall be deprived of the right of being employed in any public service by reason of his caste, creed or colour. Having regard to that, it is obvious that every member of the Depressed Class community who is capable, who is in a position to satisfy the test laid down for employment in any public department, should have the right to enter that public department. But what do we find? We find this. If a Depressed Class man applied for service in the Police Department to-day, he is told point blank by the executive officers of the Government that no member of the Depressed Classes can be employed in the Police-service, because he is an untouchable person. In the case of the Military the same situation obtains. Upto 1892 prac-

tically the whole of the Madras Army and whole of the Bombay Army consisted of members drawn from the Depressed Classes.....Yet in 1892 a rule or regulation was made which debarred the Depressed Classes from entry into the military service, and even to-day, if you ask a question in the Legislative Council as to why this is done, the answer is that the bar of untouchability does create insuperable difficulties in the recruitment of these classes.

I can cite many other cases. For instance, there is the difficulty the Depressed Classes find in getting themselves accommodated in a public inn when they are travelling, the difficulty they find in being taken in an omnibus when travelling from one place to another, the difficulty they find in securing entry to public schools to which they have themselves contributed, the difficulty they find in drawing water from a well for the building of which they have paid taxes, and so on. But I need not go into all these cases. The one circumstance which distinguishes the position of the Depressed Classes from that of the other minorities is that they suffer from civic disabilities which are as effective as though they were imposed by law.

The second and, in my opinion, the most hideous distinction which marks the Depressed Classes is that **the Depressed Classes are subject to social persecution unknown in any other part of the world.** In that connection I want to read to the sub-Committee a small extract from the Report of a Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay in the year 1928 to investigate into the position of the Depressed Classes

This is what the Committee said :

“Although we have recommended various remedies to secure to the Depressed Classes their rights to all public utilities we fear that there will be difficulties in the way of their exercising them for a long time to come. The first difficulty is the fear of open violence against them by the orthodox classes. It must be noted that the Depressed Classes form a small minority in every village, opposed to which is a great majority of the orthodox, who are bent on protecting their interests and dignity from any supposed invasion by the Depressed Classes at any cost. The danger of prosecution by the Police has put a limitation upon the use of violence by the orthodox classes and consequently such cases are rare.

The second difficulty arises from the economic position in which the Depressed classes are found to-day. The Depressed classes have no economic independence in most parts of the Presidency. Some cultivate the lands of the orthodox classes as their tenants at will. Others live on their earnings as farm labourers, employed by the orthodox classes and the rest subsist on the food or grain given to them by the orthodox classes in lieu of service rendered to them as village servants. We have heard of numerous instances where the orthodox classes have used their economic power as a weapon against those Depressed Classes in their villages, when the latter have dared to exercise their rights, and have evicted them from their land, and stopped their employment and discontinued their remuneration as village servants. This boycott is often planned on such an extensive scale as to include the prevention of the Depressed

Classes from using the commonly used paths and the stoppage of sale of the necessities of life by the village Bania. According to the evidence sometimes small causes suffice for the proclamation of a social boycott against the Depressed Classes. Frequently it follows on the exercise by the Depressed Classes of their right to the use of the common well, but cases have been by no means rare where a stringent boycott has been proclaimed simply because a Depressed Class man has put on the sacred thread, has bought a piece of land, has put on good clothes or ornaments, or has carried a marriage procession with the bridegroom on the horse through the public street.

A Hindu may keep a lower class mistress with impunity but he is outcasted if he eats food cooked or served by her or takes it from her hands. Generally speaking, the test of a caste, which does not pollute others is whether the Lords of creation, the Brahmans, will drink water at its hands. An exception is made in the case of Ganges water, which is held to be so unpollutable that it may be drunk even when given by Untouchables. I speak a little of Untouchables later ; they are those who are too defiling for the Hindu even to recognise them as one of his own castes, however lowly. They are to him subhuman and so he has treated them for thousands of years.

No one drinks out of a vessel that has been used by another caste. If he were to do so, and were a Brahman thereafter to drink, the latter would have to purify himself at once ; if he were of a lower caste, then the vessel would become useless to higher caste owner. Therefore, those who

distribute water at railway stations are always Brahmans and they pour the water from their own container into the vessel of the drinker.

The shadow of a stranger, or even his glance, falling on a cookpot may be regarded as so polluting the food of a caste Hindu as to make it uneatable. It is thus that you and I are regarded. It is, of course, an insolence to us or to any other human being and some times induces foreigners to treat Hindu with contempt. This is then resented by the Hindu and so animosity is bred.

A Kahar may eat the leavings of a superior caste until he himself is married, when he may no longer do so. Some castes will refuse food from their own daughters once they are married, although married to men of their own caste.

The process of cooking and eating is that of a magic ceremony. Consider a Nagar Brahman who must, before cooking his meal, bathe and dress in clean clothes which must first have been washed and dried in a place where nothing can contaminate them.

Hinduism squeezes their lives out of them but yet caresses them into submission. Any other religion would treat them better, give them at least the dignity of human beings, encourage them to look their fellows straight in the face instead of passing with downcast submissive eyes.

In 1930 a group of Outcastes, Chamars, had the affrontery to dress like Rajputs and to mount a bridegroom of theirs upon a horse. To put a stop to this pride the caste Hindus ordained for them eleven prohibitions.

- (1) Not to wear clothes below their knees.
- (2) Men and women not to wear gold jewels.
- (3) Women to carry water only in mud pots, not in copper or brass.
- (4) Children not to read or make themselves literate.
- (5) Children only to tend cattle of Mirasdars.
- (6) Men and women to work as slaves for Mirasdars.
- (7) Not to cultivate land on lease from Mirasdars.
- (8) To sell their own land at very cheap rates to Mirasdars, otherwise no water to be given them for irrigation.
- (9) Men and women to work as coolies for Mirasdars at starvation rates from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- (10) Not to use Indian music at celebrations.
- (11) Not to use a horse in marriage processions but to use their house doors as palanquins for these processions and no vehicle to be used by them for any purpose.

It is the Hindu and Hinduism which have been the stumbling block to all our attempts to better the life of the people. Wherever we turned we found ourselves up against the hindering influence of the Brahman.

Whereas the Brahman is free to come and go as he pleases, the Sudra may only use the south gate of the town to carry out his dead. (That would be the yellow gate, not the black as one would expect from the Varna). The Brahman is the Lord of the whole Hindu creation and is entitled to the usufruct of everything; it is all his. The Laws Manu lay down that a Brahman, learned or ignorant, is a

great deity. A king may not execute a Brahman; he may at most banish him but may not touch his property or harm his body. The Brahman is the measure of all things; all other castes are classified in the system according to the behaviour of the Brahman towards them in the matter of food or drink, whether he takes or rejects them at hands of the donor. Two Brahman girls playing at the gates of a city who, seeing some Chandals, must go at once and decontaminate their eves. There are Hindus who may not approach a Brahman because the latter must purify himself if they come too close.

We do not know of any weapon more effective than this social boycott, which could have been invented for the suppression of the Depressed Classes. The method of open violence pales away before it, for it has been most far-reaching and deadening effects. It is the more dangerous because it passes as a lawful method consistent with the theory of freedom of contact. We agree that this tyranny of the majority must be put down with a firm hand if we are to guarantee the Depressed Classes the freedom of speech and action necessary for their uplift.

✻ A third thing which the Depressed Classes fear more than any other community is that whatever representation they may be granted in the new legislature, they will always be in a very small minority, and consequently, having regard to the apathetic attitude of the orthodox classes towards the Depressed Classes, there is always the danger of the interests of the Depressed Classes being neglected altogether, or some action taken which may ultimately prove to be prejudicial to their interests.

The first observation that I will make is this—that we, the Depressed Classes, demand a complete partition between ourselves and the Hindus. That is the first thing. We have been called Hindus for political purposes, but we have never been acknowledged socially by the Hindus as their brethren. They have taken to themselves all the political advantages which our numbers, which our voting strength, have given to them, but in return we have received nothing. All that we have received is a treatment, which is worse than the treatment that they themselves have accorded to other communities, whom they do not call Hindus. That must be the first thing, therefore, that we want done.

The second thing that I will say concerns the question of weightage. Now, this system-I will be plain-to my mind has been abused. I am not against the principle of weightage. I do not accept the principle that in all circumstances every minority must be confined to its population ratio. A minority may be so small that its population ratio may give a representation which may be wholly inadequate for the purpose of its protection.... In our opinion weightage is to be conceded because a minority is weak, either in number, or because its social standing is low, or its educational standing is backward as compared with others, or because its economic strength is not sufficient to place it on a fighting par with other communities.

If you have again adult suffrage for the election of members of the Central Legislature, then of course, the Depressed Classes will claim separate representation in the legislature, such number of seats being allotted to them in conjunction with the seats allotted to other minorities. But if your

representation is to be by suffrage, which is higher or much higher, based on property and so much higher that the Depressed will probably be entirely left out, then I am afraid the Depressed Classes will have to claim indirect election to the Central Legislature, carried on by electoral colleges composed of members of the Depressed Classes, in the Provincial Legislature, in municipalities, and in district local boards. That is all that I have to say so far as the Depressed Classes are concerned.

APPENDIX II

INDIA-TO-DAY

Mr. Moinul Hoq Chowdhury served as Minister for Agriculture in the Assam Government for a long time. He was later taken into the Indira Cabinet as Minister for Industries. In this latter capacity Mr. Chowdhury once saw a number of Muslim Industrialists at Bombay Government House. He told them that he was very sorry that to limit his assistance to Hindu Industrialists alone and would be glad to have an opportunity to help the Muslims. He advised them to launch a newspaper where they could air their grievances. This was the only reason why Mr. Moinul Hoq Chowdhury was dismissed from the Indira Cabinet. (See the Indian National News Weekly, New Wave, August 13, 1973).

The following extract is from a speech delivered by Mr. Moinul Hoq Chowdhury some time in 1973 in the Indian Parliament as reproduced in the weekly 'Desh Bangla', Dacca, 2nd September, 1973.

"India To-day"

The reason I am taking part in to-day's debate is because I want to draw the attention of the majority community at every national level to an important problem. I apologise in advance for any reference that I may have to make in

the course of my speech to the problem of the Muslims. I hope they will not misunderstand me. I have been a member of the Congress and also a member of the Congress Parliamentary Party since 1952. I have been in the Congress for the last twenty-one years because I believed and still believe, that the Congress would succeed in establishing socialism, equality and social justice to this country.

I have full confidence in the secular outlook of the majority of our countrymen. I recall with gratitude that the father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi laid down his life for the sake of the Muslim. The three Prime Ministers that we have had have worked tirelessly in the cause of national integration, and this work is still continuing. I know that most of the members of Parliament are concerned about the minorities, specially the Muslims.

I should like to express my gratitude to all of those who raised the question of the Muslim minority on July 24.

I admit nevertheless that the official reply to the supplementaries to question No. 24 could not but perturb me considerably. Why? I know that my friend Shri Lalit Narayan Mishra is a good and considerate person and is in no way responsible for the present state of affairs in the Railway Department. He took over only the other day in succession to a number of Ministers who have held charge of the Railways since Independence. I also know that the Muslims and other minorities do not fare well in departments other than the Railways. And the position is the same in all the states.

But the Minister's remark did perturb me. I am quoting what he said about the Muslims and Christians :

“A few weeks ago we carried out a survey about their employment position. And we are not satisfied with the results.”

This means that the Railway Ministry has been able to ascertain the facts about the position of the Muslims and the minorities in the Railway service, but the Minister did not want to disclose them to this House. He avoided admitting that the position is deplorably unsatisfactory and that the Minister felt too embarrassed to disclose those facts to the world. Shri Indrajit Gupta, Shri Piloo Modi, my colleague Shri S. P. Sharma and several other members complained of discrimination against Muslims. I myself voiced the same complaint. The Minister rejected the allegation and said that the Railway Service Commission had had two Muslim Chairmen. First, this statement is incorrect. The Railway Service Commission has only one Chairman, not two. Secondly, the Chairman has to take decision in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the members. Thirdly, the number of Class IV employees in the Railways including semi-skilled workers, messengers, gatemen, chaprasies would exceed seven lakh (7,00,000). These are not appointed through the Railway Service Commission. I hope the Minister for Railway will please tell us—it is a request from all of us—what proportion of the 51,472 Class III and over eight hundred thousand class IV employees is drawn from the Muslims, Christians, Scheduled Castes and the Tribal population of the hilly regions.

The Minister for Railways has also said that in spite of the Railway Service Commission having had one Muslim Chairman (not two, as he said) the number of Muslim

employees on March 31, 1971 in classes I and II stood at 150 out of 7,000, the ratio unfortunately being 2.18 per cent. The number of class I and Class II employees has risen from 7,000 to 8,296. But I know that in spite of this increase in the total number, the proportion of Muslims has fallen further. If the Minister has any doubt about the accuracy of their figures he should disclose the correct statistics himself. My statistics may not be correct because I have collected them from various sources and newspapers. Here is a supplementary question for the Minister. Since his office is located in the Railway House, he should be able to confirm that there are no Muslims among the several thousand employees in the Railway House beginning with shiftmen and chaprasis, and if there are any, their ratio does not exceed 0.05 per cent. Let the Minister for Railways prove by his own statistics that my figures are wrong.

I have in front of me the Telephone Directory for the capital city of Delhi. We are all proud of this city. The Directory contains on pages 466 to 468 the telephone numbers of Section Officers. Out of 530 officers' names I have been able to discover only five Muslim names. They include that of my friend Shri Qureshi, the State Minister. This is the picture of the state of affairs inside the Railway House.

Shri V. Basumatari : This list does not include the name of any Harijan.

Mainul Huq Chowdhury . I donot know who is a Harijan and who is not a Harijan, because it is impossible to distinguish any one by his title.

There is no Muslim on the personal staff of either of

the two Railway Ministers. In this Connection I would only remind the Minister that charity begins at home.

Of course the Telephone Directory would include the names of officers only, not those of assistant chaprasies (they would number several thousand). If, therefore, I maintain that the proportion of Muslim employees in the Railway House is 0.05 per cent., would I be wrong? If the Hon'ble members or any one else accused the Minister of discrimination against the Muslims, would that be wrong? Let us again examine the Telephone Directory, particularly the number of Railway employees with telephones in Delhi. These people work outside the Railway House. But they are Railway officers. 611 among them have telephones and, believe me, out of them only three are Muslims.

A member : Thank God.

Mr. Moinul Hoq Chowdhury : Some one has said, Thank God. But I say, Ameen. These figures show the percentage of Muslims to be 0.49. Yet the Minister would still say there has been no discrimination. I hope he would not repeat this statement and prove himself....no, I would not repeat the word.

But let the Minister himself say how many Muslims, Harijans and members of the minority communities figure among eight hundred thousand class IV employees. Only a while ago my friend Shri S. M. Banerjee quoted a statement by the Home Minister on the employment position in the Central Secretariat up to May, 1971. I shall not go into details for want of time; I can say that out of 19,379 employees including Lower Division clerks the total number

of Muslims here is only 85. Out of 5,381 class IV employees including chaprasies, the Muslims account for only 39.

A friend asked me what I myself did in the matter during the time that I was a Minister. Upto March 31, 1971 my tenure of office had not completed more than a few months. But it is on record that the number of Muslims employed in the Industrial Development Ministry reached the figures **in comparison the percentage of Muslims in the Ministries of Education and Law and also in the Department of Parliamentary Affairs was nil.** In spite of the sacrifices of officers like Abdul Hamid, General Osman and General Shaikh in the was with Pakistan the percentage of Muslims in the Defence Department is 0.07.

Deputy Speaker : Where did you get these figures readymade ?

Mainul Huq Chowdhury : These figures were published in the News papers four months ago. I sent them to the Prime Minister. But so far I have not received any reply from the Prime Minister saying that they are incorrect.

You say that there is no discrimination. But are opportunities for employment for a particular community being increased through scholarships, training and other facilities ? Out of about 200 persons recruited annually into the I.A.S. and I.F.S., the proportion of Muslims is one or some times less than one.

I request you not to push the Muslims towards those politicians who demand fixed quotas for them.

APPENDIX III

“THIS PLAGUE”

Mr. Annada Shankar Roy, I.C.S.

The wife of a friend of mine, who was herself Jewish, told me once that anti-semitism had become endemic in Europe. I remember to this day the sad expression on her face.

I feel constrained to observe with the same kind of feeling that hatred for Muslims has become endemic in India. People have lost their confidence in Gandhism; they do not trust the police and frequently speak of the military as the only hope.

Recently I read in a newspaper that the people of a certain area in Ahmedabad were all ordered to crawl on their chests. If that is true, this was a repetition in his native city of the incidents of half a century ago in East Punjab which led Gandhiji to launch a civil disobedience movement.

✓ Foreigners took pictures for display on T. V. to prove how barbarous we had become. Why should we feel surprised if those who had committed the barbarities shown on T. V. were ordered to crawl on their chests? Who could protest against such an order in view of the manner in which men burnt one another to death like moths?

✓ The British are gone. So they can not be held blame—worthy for all that happened.

✓ There is no persecution of the Hindus in Pakistan. So Pakistan can not be blamed either. Communal riots between Hindus and Muslims have become a frequent occurrence and they all happen on Indian soil. Some say that most of the incidents originate with the Muslims and they detect Pakistan's hand in this. Neither of the two statements has been proved and without proof statements of this kind can not be accepted. Those who have made these statements are not known to have investigated the incidents in detail or to have examined official records. The consequences of irresponsible utterances can only further anti-Muslim feeling.

One of the parties which had failed to score satisfactory results in the Ahmedabad municipal elections took out a procession and raised slogans to the effect that the Muslims are traitors and must be sent away to Pakistan. It was four days later that the riots began.

However, the riots may have started, the purpose behind them was to drive the Muslims away to Pakistan. That would have made it possible to occupy their houses and lands. Land prices in Ahmedabad are extremely high. If the slums could be burnt down one could acquire land free. We have seen the same game in Calcutta before.

Under the new dispensation separate electorates and the quota system in the services have been abolished. The result is that the Indian Muslims have been reduced to sore straits.

They fail in the competition with other communities and where there is no competition they have no chance at all. Their children migrate to Pakistan of their own accord; they do not have to be forced to do so. Those who do not migrate face utter unemployment.

Similar things have happened elsewhere also in history. There was a time when it was impossible for a Catholic or a non-conformist or a Jew to obtain employment in England or to be elected to Parliament. That, however, did not daunt them. They took to agriculture, business, manufactures, industry, banking etc. and made a great deal of progress. No one could stop them. Some chocolate manufacturers who were Quakers once said in an advertisement that their forefathers had been obliged to turn to business when employment opportunities were denied them. As pacifists they would not enlist in the army. They were utterly helpless but from this position they have worked their way up to great wealth and also turned their wealth to good uses. Their helplessness proved a blessing in disguise. They have no regrets. The election of Richard Nixon as President of the U.S.A., has shown that the Quakers are capable of running a State too.

This Muslims are not pacifists like the Quakers. They have no objection to military service. Many have already joined the armed forces. More can do so. That is one solution of the unemployment problem. Muslims are being recruited also in the Police under the direct supervision of the Indian Government in order to give the minorities a sense of greater self-confidence.

The greatest single factor in communal rioting in this has been the cow.

Since Independence cow slaughter and the sale of beef have been prohibited in many Indian states.

✓ If this had been done with the consent of the Muslims, there would have been no trouble. But the policy was determined by Hindu votes. Decisions are taken in a democracy according to the wishes of the majority. So, what was done was not undemocratic. But one of the conventions in a democracy is that in matters of religion the votes of the majority are not enough. In matters of diet the Bangalees are fish eaters. The Biharis have lately taken to eating fish but they were not used to fish in the past. Now, if the state of Bihar prohibits by law the eating of fish, that would not be undemocratic, but that is not spirit of democracy.

Music before mosques has also been the cause of much bloodshed. Recently the Supreme Court gave a ruling that everybody had a right to play musical instruments on public thorough fares. This has pleased the Hindus as greatly as it has displeased the Muslims. This shows how greatly Muslim feeling is excited by music before mosques. Why then insist on music when the Muslims pray in the mosque? The rule in the past was that music before mosques was to be avoided at a prayer time. But this rule was not followed at Jagaddal.

Another source of friction is Urdu. This language has grown through the joint efforts of Hindus and Muslims.

Neither has an exclusive right to it. Urdu is the mother tongue of many Hindus in the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Let Hindi thrive by all means, but why should this mean the decline of Urdu? The injustice done to Urdu over the last twenty-two years has given rise to the fear in Muslim minds that Urdu would gradually perish. The fear may be exaggerated but it is real. We should not blink our eyes to the real apprehension.

We have two ties with Pakistan. One is Bengali, the other is Urdu. If these two ties are severed, India and Pakistan would be total strangers to each other. Have not the rulers or the influential section of the community in Northern India tried to sever the tie represented by Urdu? It is not possible to convert the Muslims to Hinduism but it is possible to force Hindi on them. That may not be as cruel as expulsion but this is certainly a kind of persecution.

✓ There is a party in our 'secular' state.....I would not name them but you would understand who they are... ..who believe in the expulsion of the Muslims from India, if possible and if not, in their conversion to Hinduism. If this too proves impracticable **they Hinduise the Muslims culturally.**

It is said that the Gujratis had been told that since a State called Pakistan had been established, the Muslims could have no right to stay in India. That basic question is again before us twenty-two years after Independence. Who takes the trouble of explaining to the ordinary Hindus that our culture is a mixed culture to which the Muslims have contributed greatly, and that our economy is a mixed

economy in which the Muslims have a role play? The reason why communalists succeed in turning people's heads is because we have neglected to explain this to the people.

If the Muslims quit, we shall be known as Hindustanis and our country will be named Hindustan.

When Hindu communalists use the word Bharat they use it in the sense of a Homeland for the Hindus alone. People feel confused when the same word is used in different senses. In the present context this confusion has muddled their brains.

(Jugantar 20th Kartic, 1367).

APPENDIX IV

THE INDIAN SECULARISM—A MOCKERY

Appendix I incorporated in the book relates to the speech delivered by Dr. Ambedkar in the Round Table Conference held in London in the year 1930-31.

Dr. Ambedkar in his memorable speech bitterly observed :—

✓ “The first observation that I will make is this—that we the depressed classes demand a complete partition between ourselves and the Hindus. That is the first thing. We have been called Hindus for political purposes but we have never been acknowledged socially by the Hindus as their brethren. They have taken to themselves all the political advantages which our number which our voting strength, have given to them, but in return what we have received is a treatment which is worse than the treatment they themselves have accorded to the other communities, whom they do not call Hindus. That must be the first thing, therefore, that we want done.”

Since then 44 years elapsed but the treatment meted out by the caste Hindus to the ten crore untouchables of India still continues as before.

Lt. General B. M. Kaul of India in his book 'Confrontation with Pakistan' published in 1971 observed, “The caste

system has been one of the greatest curses. Segregations of Harijans in our society is severer than any colour or other bar against a racial or religious minority in the world. Whatever laws we pass an untouchable remains an untouchable for the vast majority of us. In rural areas, this plays a havoc with the moral of the people and interferes with most of their endeavours.” The observation of Lt. Gen. B. M. Kaul finds support in a recent news published in ‘Daily Ittafaq’ dated 29th June, 1974 wherein it was reported that the high caste Hindus killed several untouchable Hindus because they used a well to fetch water which was reserved for the high caste Hindus. The fact is that in Ahmedabad at Surendranagar district there is a village named Rammalpur. The village was facing acute shortage of water. The untouchable Hindus in order to quench their thirst lifted one bucketful of water from a well reserved for high caste Hindus. This infuriated the high caste Hindus to raise hue and cry that the entire water of the well has been polluted by the low caste Hindus by using the well. The high caste Hindus immediately killed two untouchable and mercilessly beat the others. One untouchable Hindu Bijal Govinda took shelter in a temple but even then he was not spared and the caste Hindus killed him in the temple. Another untouchable Hindu Devajit took shelter in a grain container where the caste Hindus killed him. The terrorised untouchable Hindus of the village narrated this sad inhuman behaviour and unprecedented cruelty meted out by the caste Hindus towards the untouchables to Mr. K. K. Biswanath the Governor of Ahmedabad.

The speech of Mr. Moinul Hoque Chowdhury delivered

at the Indian Lok Sabha (Parliament) and the article of Mr. Annada Shankar Roy, I.C.S., which form part of this book as Appendix II and III should serve as an eye opener to the rest of the world about the Indian design to destroy the backbone of the Indian Muslims, politically, economically and culturally. The treatment meted out towards Muslims of India by high caste Gandhi cap ruling party is worse than the treatment they have accorded to untouchable class of India. The misery of the Indian Muslims increased thousand fold since the last 25 years as a second class citizen of the so-called secular India.

It will not be out of place to mention here another similar incident of remote past wherein the Hindu students refused to sit together with the Muslims students at Presidency College, Calcutta.

✓ The 1st year Hindu students of Presidency College out of hatred refused to sit together with the Muslim students and they petitioned to their Principal Mr. Tony that the Hindu students could not sit with the Muslim students because of the smell of onion coming out from the mouth of Muslim students." The Principal referred the matter to the then Professor Harish Chandra Kabiratna who settled up the matter that the Muslim students should sit separately on the left side, the Hindu students on the right side which resulted in a complete segregation of the Muslim students imposed at the instance of Hindu students". It reminds us the segregation of black and white as we find now-a-days in U.S.A. and South Africa.

This fact was published in a famous Bengali Journal 'Prabashi' from Calcutta in 1332 B.S. Kartic, page 48.

Since 1930 there have been lots of political, social and economic upheavals in the sub-continent but the mentality of high caste Hindus of India continues the same as before. The boastful claim of so-called Indian secularism is nothing but a mockery.

